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ARA #1

(94) AF IG CAR

AM F

BELIZE CHIEF

SPANISH LOOKOUT, BELIZE (AP) -- [illegible] THE BRITISH HONDURAS FOR SUGAR, [illegible] TRAIL, REVERED FOR ITS HARD WORK AND [illegible] TO UNDERTAKE A DRIVING OUT OF THE JUNGLE.

SPANISH LOOKOUT AND TWO OTHER SIMILAR COLONIES ARE HOME TO ABOUT 7,000 MENNONITE AND AMISH SETTLERS WHO EMIGRATED HERE BEGINNING IN 1958 SEEKING LAND, RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AND ISOLATION.

ALTHOUGH THE MENNONITES AND AMISH ARE PEACEFUL PEOPLE, PREMIER GEORGE PRICE TOLD THE ASSOCIATED PRESS HE "WOULDN'T LIKE TO SEE ANY MORE OF THEM MOVE HERE" BECAUSE "THEY KEEP TOO MUCH TO THEMSELVES."

"WHAT THE PREMIER MEANS WHEN HE SAYS HE WOULDN'T LIKE TO SEE ANY MORE MENNONITES HERE COMES FROM THE FACT THEY ARE NOT ECONOMICALLY INTEGRATED WITH THE REST OF BELIZE," SAID CENTRAL PLANNING UNIT CHIEF CLARENCE SUBLETTE, WHO WROTE A MASTER'S THESIS ON THE COMMUNITY. "BY DOING BUSINESS WITH THE MENNONITES IN LIKE KIND WITH A FOREIGN POWER. IT PROVIDES THEM WITH A MARKET BUT IT IS STRICTLY A ONE-WAY FLOW. THEY ARE GETTING FROM US."

THE MENNONITE COLONY LOOKS LIKE SIMILAR COMMUNITIES IN PENNSYLVANIA. THE DIFFERENCE IS, IT IS HOTTER HERE. DIRT ROADS INTERSECTING AT RIGHT ANGLES DIVIDE THE COMMUNITY INTO NEAT SQUARES. GRAVEL DRIVES LEAD TO NEAT WHITE FARM HOUSES AND [illegible] GROUPS OF WOMEN CHAT IN LONG SKIRTS, AS BAREFOOT CHILDREN [illegible] THE LANES. IN THE MIDST OF THE FIELDS OF TALL CORN [illegible] BY DIESEL TRACTORS.

"[illegible] PEOPLE HAVE A LOT TO SAY," SAID MENNONITE FARMER JOHN [illegible], AND MANAGER OF POULTRY BUSINESS THAT SUPPLY CENTRAL AMERICA. "PEOPLE LOOK AT WHAT THEY LIKE. IF I AT HOME SAW MORE [illegible] THE AVERAGE BELIZE FARM, WE'D BE COMPETING MORE."

[illegible] SAID THE FIRST SETTLERS TO THE COLONY WERE OF MEXICAN [illegible] BUT IMMIGRANTS FROM CANADA [illegible] THE LAST WAVE, FROM 1958 STRICTLY MENNONITE, [illegible] FARMERS [illegible] SPANISH LOOKOUT ARRIVED FROM MENNONITE SETTLEMENTS IN BOLIVIA [illegible] AND OTHER TRAILS.

[illegible] SETTLERS NUMBER 10,742 [illegible] OF THE AREA. THE [illegible] THE COMMUNITY, BUT [illegible] SOLD TO [illegible] IN PURCHASE PRICE. [illegible] THE [illegible] FOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS.

[illegible] SAID THE MENNONITES SUPPLY ALL OF THE DAIRY PRODUCTS IN THE SELF-GOVERNING BRITISH COLONY OF 145,000 PEOPLE. THEY ALSO [illegible] PERCENT OF THE POULTRY, AND THE COLONY RAISES [illegible] OF RICE, CORN AND A TOTAL OF ABOUT 30 [illegible], SOYBEANS AND [illegible].

"[illegible] REALLY A GOOD WHITE TRACT IN THE COUNTRY," SAID A [illegible] "[illegible] THEY DON'T SAY IT MUCH, BUT IT'S A DIFFICULT [illegible]."

-- [illegible] LOCKHART

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